

The Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the
Year 1948.

To the Chairman, and Members of the Torpoint Urban District
Council.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for the year 1948. Judged by vital statistics of Births, Deaths, and Infectious Diseases the health of the community in the Torpoint Urban District has been on the whole up to the average of that prevailing throughout England and Wales. There was an increase in the number of infectious diseases notified from 16 in 1947 to 47 in 1948. There were no outbreaks of serious infectious disease.

As far as the administrative aspect of Public Health was concerned the year 1948 was marked by two radical changes:-

(1) The National Health Service Act, 1946, came into operation on the Appointed Day, 5th. July, 1948. By virtue of this all hospitals came under the control of the South West Regional Hospital Board, the duty of providing services under Part III of the Act devolved upon the Cornwall County Council, and all actively practising general medical practitioners and dentists in the Urban District came within the scope of Part IV of this Act.

(2) The arrangement whereby the duties of Medical Officer of Health of the Urban District were carried out in a part-time capacity by Dr. A.L. Davies, came to an end, and this appointment was combined with those of five neighbouring County Districts in South East Cornwall, and with the appointment of Assistant County Medical Officer. The duties of the latter appointment relate to the detailed day to day administration of schemes formulated by the County Council under Part II of the National Health Service Act, 1946. Those parts of these schemes which have special reference to the Urban District will be dealt with in the body of my report.

I have to acknowledge my thanks to your previous Medical Officer of Health the late Dr. A.L. Davies, to the Sanitary Inspector Mr. Wilson Hogarth, and to those members and officials of the Urban District Council who assisted me in taking over and becoming familiar with the duties and responsibilities of the appointment of Medical Officer of Health.

I have the honour to be,

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

P. J. Fox

Medical Officer of Health.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2018 with funding from
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b30190484>

Torpoint Urban District - Vital Statistics for 1948.

Area of Urban District

Registrar-Generals Estimate
of the 1948 Resident Population 3760

Number of Inhabited Houses

Rateable Value of Urban District £34039

Sum Represented by penny rate £ 146

Live Births

	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	35	37	72
Illegitimate	2	-	2
	37	37	74

	Torpoint U.D.	England & Wales
Birth-rate per 1,000 of population	19.7	17.9

Still Births

	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	1	-	1
Illegitimate	-	-	-
	1	-	1

	Torpoint U.D.	England & Wales
Still birth-rate per 1,000 of population	0.27	0.42

Deaths

	Male	Female	Total
	32	25	57

	Torpoint U.D.	England & Wales
Death rate per 1,000 of population	15.2	10.8

Deaths Attributed to Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Puerperal State.

No deaths under this head.

Deaths of Infants Under One Year of Age.

All Causes - 1

Torpoint U.D.

England & Wales

Infant Mortality Rate
per 1,000 live births

13.5

34

Deaths from Enteritis & Diarrhoea - Under Two Years of Age.

Torpoint U.D.

England & Wales

Death rate per
1,000 live births

Nil

3.3

Principal Causes of Death at All Ages.

Heart diseases

20

Cancer (all sites)

11

Other Circulatory diseases

8

Intra-cranial vascular lesions("stroke")

4

Tuberculosis

3

Kidney diseases

2

Influenza

2

General Provision of Health Services for the Urban District.

(a) Hospital Services. There are no hospitals in the Urban District, but the population is well served by the South Devon and East Cornwall Group of hospitals in Plymouth, which is adjacent.

(b) Laboratory Services. No Public Health Laboratory exists nearer than Exeter. The functions of this service are carried out by the Pathological Department of the South Devon and East Cornwall Hospital, Plymouth.

Chemical analyses are carried out by Messrs. Tickle & Reynolds, Analysts & Consulting Chemists, Exeter.

(c) Services Provided by the Cornwall County Council under Part III of the National Health Service Act, 1946.

(i) Care of mothers and young children. Ante-natal and post-natal care and advice over and above that provided by the family doctor, and/or the district nurse-midwife has been available at the Alexandra Maternity Home, Devonport, the City Hospital, Plymouth, or the Liskeard Ante-Natal Clinic. Normally only those women referred by their family doctor, or the district nurse midwife are seen at these Clinics.

Up to October 1948 no Infant Welfare Clinic was in operation in Torpoint. As it was felt that such a clinic was needed in a town of this size a start was made in October by holding an Infant Welfare Clinic once a month at Church House. For the three sessions held up to the end of the year the average attendance per session was 22 infants and small children a figure which justifies an increase in the frequency of these clinics from monthly to twice monthly. A qualified Health Visitor, Miss S.L. Luxton, Q.N.S., H.V., is in charge of these clinics, and the Assistant School Medical Officer, Dr. McMillan attends one session each month. A priority dental service operated by the School Dental Service was available for expectant and nursing mothers, and children of pre-school age, but no demands were placed on this service during 1948.

(ii) Midwifery Service. This service handles domiciliary midwifery only, and is provided in Torpoint by Nurse Gould S.R.N. S.C.M., and by Nurse Rowse S.E.A.N., S.C.M. During the year 1948 these nurses attended some 45 confinements and carried out some 1,100 visits in connection with this service.

(iii) Health Visiting Service. This is carried out by Miss S. L. Luxton, Q.N.S. H.V.

(iv) Home Nursing Service. This is carried out by Nurses Gould and Rowse. During the year they carried out some 3,200 visits in connection with this service.

(v) Ambulance Service. By arrangement with the St. John Ambulance Brigade, the Torpoint Division co-operated with the County Council in continuing to run this service after the Appointed Day, 5th. July, 1948. Towards the end of August 1948, three full-time drivers, Messrs. Humpherson, Keast and Fisher were appointed to man the ambulance car from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Monday to Friday inclusive and from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays. At night and over the week-end the vehicle is manned by voluntary driver-attendants from the Torpoint St. John Division under conditions agreed between the St. John Ambulance Brigade and the County Council. The people of Torpoint and the surrounding districts owe a debt of gratitude to the officers and members of the Torpoint St. John Division for their co-operation, and for the spirit of service to the community shown by them in the difficult period when responsibility for this service was passing from the voluntary association to the County Council.

The following brief statistics give a general idea of the work carried out during the year 1948 by the St. John Ambulance car.

Patients Carried.

1688

Miles Travelled.

9,709

(vi) Prevention of Illness, Care and After-Care Services. During 1948 it has not been possible to introduce any new schemes aimed at the prevention of illness. Before any such schemes can be formulated it will be necessary to ascertain at least the main causes

of illness, and to have available suitable methods and facilities for health education of the general public.

Active preventative measures in the shape of immunisation against diphtheria and vaccination against small pox have been available either from the family doctor or at Infant Welfare Clinics. Whilst it is not possible to give the exact numbers of children who were immunised against diphtheria during 1948, a reliable estimate made at the end of the year showed that 80% of children under the age of five had been immunised against diphtheria.

The response to vaccination against small pox is much less encouraging. Prior to the Appointed Day about 40% of all infants were vaccinated. Since July 1948 when compulsory vaccination was abolished the figure fell to about 18% for the country as a whole and as low as 12% in Cornwall.

As far as care and after care of illness was concerned practically no demand for service was experienced, though, one case of pulmonary tuberculosis was given a grant to enable her to purchase extra nourishment.

(vii) Home Help Service. This service has as its object the arranging of domestic help for homes where a genuine need exists, e.g. maternity cases, aged and infirm persons, and prolonged or chronic illness. Believing that a demand for this service existed in Torpoint, and being assured of the help of the Urban District Council's staff in its administration, the service was started in Torpoint in December, 1948, and it is believed that it will serve a very useful purpose in the Urban District. The Service which is generally organised by the Women's Voluntary Service throughout the county has as its organiser in Torpoint, Mrs. Thomas, W.V.S.

(d) Miscellaneous Other Services.

(i) Chest Clinics. Chest Clinics for established and suspected cases of pulmonary tuberculosis are held twice monthly at Beaumont House, Plymouth.

(11) Orthopaedic, Ear, Nose and Throat, Ophthalmic, Speech Therapy, and Psychiatric Clinics are held regularly at the Cornation Welfare Centre, Liskeard. Except for the Psychiatric Clinic the bulk of patients attending are school children.

Prevalence of and Control over Infectious Diseases.

As compared with 1947 when 16 cases of infectious disease were notified, the notification in 1948 of 47 cases of infectious disease represents a moderate increase, bearing in mind the fact that the 1947 figures represent a very low incidence for this type of disease. The increase in 1948 was accounted for mainly by whooping cough of which there were 34 cases and by 11 cases of scarlet fever. The following detailed figures show actual incidence and attack rates of the infectious diseases notified during 1948:-

<u>Disease.</u>	<u>Cases notified.</u>	<u>Rates per 1,000 of population.</u>	
		Torpoint U.D.	England & Wales.
Whooping Cough.	34	9.18	3.42
Scarlet Fever	11	2.97	1.73
Pneumonia	1	0.27	0.73
		<u>Rates per 1,000 Total Births.</u>	
Puerperal fever	1	13.33	6.89

With the exception of tuberculosis, which is dealt with in the next section, infectious diseases were not responsible for any deaths in 1948.

Cases of infectious disease which require hospitalisation are admitted to the Swilly Isolation Hospital, Plymouth.

Tuberculosis.

During the year 4 cases of pulmonary and 3 cases of non-pulmonary tuberculosis were notified in the Urban District. There were 3 deaths - 1 from pulmonary tuberculosis and 2 from non-pulmonary tuberculosis. The incidence during 1948 is markedly above that of 1947 when no cases were notified, and is also above the yearly average of the period 1938 -1947 when 3.8 cases per annum were notified.

The following are details of new cases notified and deaths from tuberculosis during the year 1948:-

<u>Age Period.</u>	<u>New cases.</u>		<u>Deaths.</u>	
	M.	F.	M.	F.
0 - 1				
1 - 5				
5 -15	2	1	1	1
15-45	2	1		
45-65		1		1
65 and upwards				

At the end of the year there were 15 known cases of tuberculosis resident in the Urban District. Of these 13 were pulmonary tuberculosis, and 2 non-pulmonary tuberculosis.

Suspected and established cases of pulmonary tuberculosis are seen by the Chest Physcian, Dr. Cairns at the Chest Clinic Beaumont House, Plymouth on the 2nd and 4th. Tuesday of the month. Sanatorium accommodation continues to be most difficult to obtain, and this unhappy state of affairs will persist until building and staffing of additional accommodation can be completed.

National Assistance Act, 1948.

Under Section 47 of this Act the Council is required to take *and attention for persons who for various reasons are unable to* action in connection with the securing of care, ~~and~~ adequately care for themselves. No action under this Section of the Act was called for during 1948.

Water Supply. The Urban District is unfortunate in possessing a thoroughly inadequate water supply. Quantity, especially during the summer months falls far below the normal requirements of the town, and severe rationing of the supply was necessary during the summer of 1948. The quality of the water collected into the main *at Eglarode is very poor because both streams feeding this reservoir* reservoir ~~are~~ are heavily polluted by farmyard drainage. It is only by strict attention to filtration and chlorination that bacteriologically pure water can be provided to consumers, whilst in summer months the profuse vegetable (algae) growths in the reservoirs and feeder streams give rise to a most objectionable taste in the water. It would appear that nothing short of complete abandonment of the present source of supply coupled with arrangements for procuring an alternative satisfactory supply can render the water supply wholly satisfactory. Because of the physical and financial difficulties connected with the provision of an alternative supply, it seems that the water supply of the Urban District will give rise to anxiety and dis-satisfaction for some years to come.

Drainage and Sewerage. Raw, untreated sewage from the Urban District is discharged from several outfalls into the tidal waters of the Hamoaze. Whilst this method gives rise to no very obvious nuisance, or danger to public health it cannot be claimed that it is a satisfactory method.

Disposal of Household Refuse. This is collected weekly and is disposed of by controlled tipping. On the whole methods of collection and disposal have been satisfactory during 1948.

Food Poisoning. There were no outbreaks during 1948.

Housing. Progress was maintained and during 1948 thirty traditional, and thirty Airey type houses were completed. In spite of this there is a long waiting list of people who require rehousing.

Factories Act, 1937. The number of factories in the Urban District - seventeen in all - is not large and during the year no difficulties were encountered.

Sanitary Inspectors Report. The report by Mr. W. Hogarth M.R. San.I., C.S.I.B., Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector which follows treats in greater detail many of the matters which have been touched upon in my report. Members of the Council will be aware of the multiplicity of tasks, and duties which Mr. Hogarth has so ably undertaken during the year.

Report of Sanitary Inspector to be attached.

TORPOINT URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

- Water Supplies. During the year, five chemical and thirty bacteriological samples have been taken, the results of which proved satisfactory.
- Drainage and Sewerage. The present system is "combined", and the sewage is discharged crude into the sea through three outfall pipes. The system has worked satisfactorily throughout the year and there is no special incident to note.
- Refuse Collection and Disposal. A weekly collection of house and trade refuse has been maintained and by the serving of Notices under Section 75 of the Public Health Act, the general condition of dustbins has been raised to a high standard. Controlled tipping is practised at Mill Field and is considered satisfactory.
- Housing. Steady progress has been maintained during the year thirty traditional and a similar number of Airey houses having been completed. During the same period, nineteen war destroyed houses have been rebuilt. The total number of Council houses occupied at the end of December was: Arcon bungalows 50; traditional houses 40; Airey houses 30.
- Factories and Workshops. There are seventeen factories on the register, ten of which use mechanical power. All factories were inspected during the year but no Notices under the Factories Act, 1937, were served.
- Shops. There are forty two shops on the register and during the year six inspections were carried out under the Shops Act, 1934.
- Food Premises. (a) Icecream. There are four premises registered for the manufacture and/or sale of ice cream, and three other premises where registration cannot be enforced. Regular sampling of icecream has been carried out, thirty six samples having been taken. Of these, thirty two have proved satisfactory, and it is encouraging to note that the only producer/retailer has had a 100% record of satisfactory samples. All these premises are regularly inspected, and a high standard of cleanliness is maintained.
- (b) Dairies. There are six premises in the District registered as dairies and five persons retailing milk in the District. Milk sampling for cleanliness has been regularly carried out and of the twenty six samples taken, twenty one proved satisfactory. One Phosphatase test was also satisfactory.
- (c) Other Premises. A pamphlet headed "Informal Notes for the Guidance of Food Traders" was distributed to all food traders in the District in August and a start was made on the inspection of premises.

Rodent Control.

A small number of complaints of rodent infestation were received during the year and in each case treatment was satisfactory. Regular treatment of the Council's refuse tip has reduced infestation very considerably and only an occasional rodent is now seen. Prebaiting of the sewers in the District was carried out in conjunction with the Rodent Officer of the Ministry, and the results were highly satisfactory.

Sanitary Inspections of the Area.

(a) Total number of inspections made (all purposes).	438.
(b) Informal Notices served.	30.
" " complied with.	13.
(c) Statutory Notices served.	18.
" " complied with.	10.
(d) Dustbin Notices served.	58.
" " complied with.	56.
(e) Drains tested.	26.
No. of visits re drainage.	61.
(f) Visits re infectious diseases.	14.
Premises disinfected.	10.
(g) Inspections of food premises.	28.
(h) Inspections of shops under Shops Act, 1936.	6.
(i) Inspections of factories.	17.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-

WILSON
~~WILLIAM~~ HOGARTH

Sanitary Inspector.

